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worship. They allowed the local chiefs to govern their people according to their own laws and customs, but under the authority of the Ngoni. They followed the method of governing which Europeans call "indirect rule".' They also took selected children from the conquered peoples and reared them as Ngoni in Ngoni villages. Young's account supports this.[37] Whether or not this method of government was wise is clearly a matter of opinion. It is perhaps significant that for Mpezeni's people the evidence provided by the present disposition of persons claiming descent from different ethnic groups suggests that a different policy was followed there. Chibambo and Young talk of groups of warriors under Mwambera belonging to various subjugated tribes; in Mpezeni's area captured men appear to have been drafted into the various age-set regiments, so that men from the same tribe were distributed throughout the army and did not form a distinct group. Territorially, the dispersion of captives from the same tribe was not so complete, for it appears that in Mpezeni's group the major segment settled on the east of the Ngoni area raided mostly to the east, and the western segment to the west, and so on, so that many of the captives taken from a particular locality were to be found in the major segment of the State nearest their homeland. Yet even this concentration of captives with the same ethnic origin was not complete, and representatives from all the principal tribes with whom the Ngoni came into contact are nowadays to be found in all parts of Mpezeni's Ngoniland. We suggest that this policy of assimilation, practised to a much greater degree by Mpezeni than by Mwambera, may be correlated with the fact that in Mpezeni's group there were no revolts by groups of captives of common origin, whereas in Mwambera's there were three such revolts, by Lake Tonga, Kamanga and Henga tribesmen.

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Mwambera attacked the Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu some time round about 1860, and was driven off in the face of fire from guns Mwase had obtained from Arabs. He subsequently came to an agreement with Mwase whereby the Cewa chief became his 'child' and lent him soldiers armed with guns to assist in Ngoni raids. Travellers suggest that later Mwase came to an agreement with Mpezeni as well, but this is not so certain. Mpezeni does seem to have established peaceful relations with one or two minor chieftains during the period of early European contact,[38] but for

[37] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 39-41; Young, *History*, p. 119.

[38] e.g. Cuaula, a Kunda chief and Msoro, who had Kunda and Nsenga connexions. Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 11; Sharpe, 'Journey from Lake Nyassa', p. 746.

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to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against the fissile tendencies in the former.[47]

The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his matrilateral kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own, and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making possible the few instances of fission that did occur. The Paramount Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and of the military successes of his people, but because he was the government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni society was a State.

In later years two changes took place which increased the stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In the first place, the external environment altered due to the penetration into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organization of the State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika, who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

[47] See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

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Secretariat or the Legislative Council. The agenda consists of items suggested by the African members and by the Administration. The African members of the Council elect four of their number as their nominees to the African Representative Council of Northern Rhodesia, which in its turn advises the Governor on the appointment of the African members of Legislative Council. As yet, the Provincial Council meetings attract little attention among the bulk of the African population, and few Ngoni know who their members are. Nevertheless among the chiefs and councillors these meetings, if regarded with suspicion, are of some interest, and for the two delegates they provide an opportunity for stressing in public what they regard as the Ngoni point of view as contrasted with those of other tribes. Many of the Ngoni speeches are phrased in anachronistic terms, and represent more an affirmation of how different the Ngoni are or used to be rather than a realization of how similar their interests now are to those of their neighbours. However, it is possible as the Council acquires more power and the consequences of its deliberations begin to affect more people directly, Ngoni will take a greater interest in its proceedings.[88] The same comments apply to Ngoni participation on the Provincial Team, an advisory body with representatives from the Administration, the unofficial White community, Indians and Africans.

Ngoniland is almost completely surrounded by Cewa chiefdoms. The old no-man's-land which isolated the Ngoni from their neighbours in pre-conquest times has long ago disappeared. On the fringes of Ngoni country there is a great deal of contact between Ngoni villages and their Cewa neighbours and the links of kinship stretch across tribal boundaries without interruption. Within Ngoniland itself, under the control of county chiefs, are some villages which still speak the Cewa language rather than the Nsenga dialect used by most Ngoni. Most of these Cewa-speaking villages have come into Ngoniland after 1898. Their numbers are indicated in Table VII (p. 133) where it will be seen that on the average about one village in five has entered in this way. The great majority of these are Cewa in origin. Some of them claim that they have returned to ancestral sites, others state that they came as a result of land alienation or of some quarrel with their former chief. Others have been formed by non-Ngoni immigrants who have worked for many years in the township or on the farms and built up their own followings. In Northern Rhodesia villages of this kind form an integral part of Ngoni society. The cultural features which distin-

[88] cf. Barnes, 'History', for a discussion of the way in which Ngoni members act at council meetings.

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guish them from their neighbours are no more significant than the many varieties of custom and belief which are to be found in every Ngoni village. They do not form a group among themselves, their members participate in all communal activities in their counties and are to be found at all levels of the Native Authority organization below that of chief. They are linked by kinship to their neighbours. The two Nyasaland counties, however, include relatively large areas where there are only Cewa-speaking villages, and many of these claim that they have been placed under Ngoni rule only by Administrative action. From time to time they have made efforts to break away and to attach themselves to some neighbouring Cewa chief or to establish a separate chiefdom. There appears to be a sharp distinction between the Ngoni chiefs, with the villages in their county segments, and their Cewa-speaking subjects. It will be remembered that the two Nyasaland chiefdoms represent the head of the eastern movement of Mpezeni's group, and that some of the settlement across the border took place as late as 1897. It is not surprising therefore that in these two counties assimilation of Cewa captives and immigrants has not proceeded so far as in the longer established counties in Northern Rhodesia.

11. *Conclusion*

In this study we have attempted to show what has happened in Ngoni political life during a period of 130 years. To-day Ngoni society is changing but this has not always been so. Prior to the arrival of Wiese in 1886, the actually existing social relations were changing, but the form of the social structure remained the same. Each new segment developed along lines that were already known and each time the State split, the new States were copies of the old. A system of this kind could not have lasted for long, for the supply of new recruits to the Ngoni States must have sooner or later been exhausted. In Africa, even if the overall conditions facilitated the emergence of this kind of migratory militarism, they were particularly unfavourable for its prolonged continuation. The Arabs and the European Powers behind them were closing in on the centre of Africa, and Ngoni days were numbered. Then came the defeat of the Ngoni in 1898 and the emergence of a new system, in which some of the actually existing political groups, and the relations between them, appear to have a much greater stability than before. But at the same time society as a whole has become much more diversified, the spatial distribution of men and women in significant relationship with one another has become highly complicated, and

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the northern Ngoni kingdom. Other groups of these Ngoni were found in three separate states in the Dowa and Kotakota districts. The Ngoni in the Ncheu district were known as Gomani's Ngoni and will be called in this book the central Ngoni kingdom. Four states which separated from this kingdom were found in the Dedza, Lilongwe and Cholo districts. The Ngoni in Fort Manning district belonged to Mpeseni's kingdom in the Fort Jameson district of Northern Rhodesia.

According to these census figures, the northern Ngoni kingdom with the three separated states accounted for 69,706; the central kingdom with the four separated states accounted for 46,891. Leaving out the Fort Manning Ngoni, there were 71,354 Ngoni in the rest of Nyasaland who had at one time formed part of the northern and central kingdoms and their offshoots, but who had dispersed in search of work and had made large settlements in the towns and on the estates of the southern province where employment was to be found. A similar dispersion from the main Ngoni concentrations in Nyasaland to Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa had taken place which formed part of the extensive emigration from Nyasaland in search of better employment than that available in the territory.

The existence of two Ngoni kingdoms, several smaller Ngoni states, and a still larger number of people enumerated as Ngoni but dispersed in every district of Nyasaland, poses a number of problems for the anthropologist. In this book I have concentrated on the two Ngoni kingdoms and on the Ngoni culture found in them in the 1930's. It was my intention, by focusing on the two kingdoms, to show that there was an Ngoni culture which had common elements in both areas and hence was shared to some extent by all the Ngoni living in Nyasaland. We shall be asking the questions in Part I—Who can be called Ngoni? What is Ngoni culture? Why do people in every district of Nyasaland enumerate themselves as Ngoni though a large number no longer live in the Ngoni kingdoms or in the Ngoni states? Are we discussing a people whose cultural affiliation survives political dispersal? The chief problem in the relation between the Ngoni kingdoms as political states and Ngoni culture will be stated in Part I and illustrated and analysed in the rest of the book. In this chapter, we shall examine the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the two Ngoni kingdoms.

ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

There were four main groups of people in the Ngoni kingdoms, distinguished by the areas from which their ancestors came and designated by the Ngoni as 'those from the south', 'those from south of the Zambesi', 'those from the march' and 'those from this country'. The Ngoni said that the clan descent name of a person showed to which group he or she belonged.

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173 these Ngoni before they were defeated and driven out of Songea by the
619 Gama group of Ngoni.

The northern Ngoni, who travelled east of the Luangwa valley into Tanganyika, acquired followers with clan descent names from the Nsenga in Northern Rhodesia and the Safwa and Sukuma in Tanganyika.

(*d*) '*Those from this country*'

619 Under this category were included all the local peoples in Nyasaland
563 who either were conquered by the Ngoni or surrendered to them, and who were brought within the rule of the Ngoni kingdoms. These in the northern kingdom were chiefly of Tumbuka and Henga clans, with others from Cewa and Bemba stock. In the central kingdom the local clan names were of Cewa and Yao origin.

101 Two conclusions emerge from this review of the ethnic composition
128 of the Ngoni kingdoms. The first is that the use of Ngoni as a tribal designation causes confusion. In this study the term Ngoni will be used when referring to persons whose clan descent names show that their ancestors were of Swazi or trans-Zambesi stock—that is categories (*a*) and (*b*) in this chapter. This criterion of who were Ngoni would [161] probably not correspond with the criteria used in the 1945 census enumeration. The enumerators may have asked a direct question, 'Are you Ngoni?'; they may have asked the person's clan descent name; they may have asked to which kingdom or chiefdom he belonged; or they may have asked all four questions or any two. Since the Ngoni were found in every district in the country it was likely that there was little uniformity in the form of the questions asked by the enumerators or in the criteria admitted by those being questioned for declaring themselves to be Ngoni.

101 The second conclusion is that even if the criterion is accepted that
563 the Ngoni were those whose ancestors crossed the Zambesi, the Ngoni
184 kingdoms as political states included all the four elements (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*). The status of the ethnically distinct groups in the kingdoms varied according to their clan names which indicated whether they came from the south or had been incorporated at a later stage. Ngoni forms [172] of culture were found not only in groups (*a*) and (*b*), as would be expected, but often among families in group (*c*) who, through fighting in the Ngoni armies and marrying into Ngoni families, had adopted their social and ritual pattern.[1]

174 [1] Since the first draft of this book was written, Dr. Barnes's study of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, *Politics in a Changing Society* (O.U.P., 1954), has appeared. The early history of the Ngoni in the northern kingdom is the same as that of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, up to the final separation of the kingdoms under Mpeseni and Mbelwa. Dr. Barnes's excellent bibliography gives the sources for the historical documentation of their travels. A brief sketch of the history of the two groups under the leadership of the Jere and Maseko Paramounts is given in Mary Tew's *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*.

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CHAPTER II

THE NGONI KINGDOMS

In 1933, by the Native Authorities Ordinance and the Native Courts Ordinance, Mbelwa was recognized as Paramount of the northern Ngoni kingdom with six Subordinate Native Authorities under him, and his court was constituted the appeal court for their six courts. The same procedure was followed in the central kingdom for Paramount Gomani with six Subordinate Native Authorities, and his court as the appeal court for their courts. They were the only rulers in Nyasaland with S.N.A.[1] under them. Two other chiefs, Cikulamayembe of the Henga in Mzimba district and Kyungu of the Ngonde in North Nyasa district, had respectively four and five courts subordinate to them, but the chiefs owning these courts were not recognized as their subordinates. The Ngoni comment on these ordinances was 'Ha! Now they see what big chiefs we have. Only our chiefs are called *inkosi*.'

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The northern kingdom was in Mzimba district, and Paramount Mbelwa's royal village was at the southern end of his kingdom. The central kingdom included the whole of Ncheu district with Paramount Gomani's royal village at the northern end. This kingdom had Portuguese territory on its western frontier, close to the royal village. When the Portuguese boundary was fixed in 1891, the Ngoni kingdom under the Maseko Paramount was cut in two and a section under a Maseko ruler became a separate kingdom under the Portuguese. There was constant trouble in the 1930's over this Portuguese frontier, for Gomani's Ngoni visited their relatives, grazed their cattle and hoed gardens on the Portuguese side; and from time to time claims by the Portuguese for rent for gardens and grazing lands and disputes about taxation, needed judicious handling in the District Commissioner's court.

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The figures in Table II for Mzimba and Ncheu districts in 1926, 1931, and 1945 show the changes in the ethnic composition of the districts, some of which are difficult to account for. In Mzimba district the Henga under Cikulamayembe were included in the figures for the Tumbuka and hence the northern Ngoni kingdom did not include all the 156,208 in the district. In Ncheu, the total district population of 87,690 were all included in the central Ngoni kingdom, showing the mixed ethnic elements, among which the Ngoni, or those who were enumerated as Ngoni, had declined from 64,023 in 1926 to 15,242 in 1945. Between 1931 and 1945 the decrease in the number of Ngoni (31,066) was almost balanced by the increase in the number of Nyanja

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[1] This abbreviation will be used henceforward in referring to Subordinate Native Authorities.

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(35,107). It is difficult not to assume that many Nyanja had formerly called themselves Ngoni.

Table II

	1926	1931	1945
Mzimba district			
Ngoni	25,484	24,627	44,948
Tumbuka	46,029	78,483	89,135
Cewa	14,041	2,411	21,891
Yao	20	—	—
Tonga	3,052	605	32
Nkonde	141	—	—
Others	334	156	202
Total	89,101	106,282	156,208
Ncheu district			
Ngoni	64,023	46,308	15,242
Cewa	11	4,372	2,815
Nyanja	334	25,393	60,400
Cikunda	360	940	1,336
Yao	203	1,064	3,267
Nguru, etc.	—	—	4,448
Others	13	278	182
Total	64,944	78,355	87,690

Since the two Ngoni kingdoms are the subject of this book and not the secession states, the position of the rulers of those states as Native Authorities and the circumstances of their secession from the two main groups will not be examined here. The three secession states in the north were under Chiefs Ciwere and Msakambewa in Dowa district and Jere in Kotakota district. The four connected formerly with the central Ngoni were under Chiefs Kacere and Kacindamoto in Dedza, Masula in Lilongwe and Vumbwe in Cholo.

In the 1930's, when I was living sometimes in the northern kingdom, sometimes in the central, and for a time in the Ngoni state under Chief Jere, I was aware that the existence of the two kingdoms and of the seven secession states did not preclude a great deal of contact between the Ngoni of the different areas. The stream of travel in Nyasaland from south to north and from north to south along the one trunk road, brought Ngoni as visitors from one kingdom to the other, from the smaller states to both kingdoms, and from 'the Ngoni of the dispersion' living in towns to visit their relatives and friends in the Ngoni kingdoms and states. These visits might be social, to see parents or to marry a wife; they might be for economic purposes, to invest in or sell cattle, to supervise cotton or tobacco marketing; or they might be for ritual purposes such as mourning. When I travelled in the central Ngoni kingdom in 1936 with Y. M. Cibambo, the historian of the northern

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with the military organization and the Paramountcy. The main emphasis in the study is, however, on the Ngoni kingdoms in the 1930's, when the Paramount and the administrative organization under him were recognized by the Nyasaland government. Though certain elements in the kingdoms, as for example the position and authority of the *ahumuzana*, were not recognized by the ordinance, the supreme authority of the Paramounts and the position of their appeal courts received additional support from the colonial officials, from the financial basis of the administration, and from the many new responsibilities of the Paramount for his people illustrated by the bye-laws made and the welfare measures carried out.

It is the Ngoni kingdoms as they functioned in the 1930's which will be compared with other African political systems, bearing in mind all the time that behind the Ngoni kingdoms lay the authority and power of the colonial government. The comparison will be made with the general characteristics of what were called by the editors of *African Political Systems*, in their introductory essay, 'Group A systems', and the references will be to the criteria and concepts in that introduction.

The main characteristics cited of the Group A systems were all to be found in the Ngoni kingdoms: centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions. These will be the chief material in Part II of this book on the Ngoni political system. In *African Political Systems* the editors stated that all the societies described in the book which were in the category of Group A systems were 'an amalgam of different peoples, each aware of its unique origin and history, and all except the Zulu and Bemba are still today culturally heterogenous'. Such a definition was appropriate for the Ngoni kingdoms, where political authority was wielded over several different peoples, as the ethnic grouping in the 1945 census showed, and where there was cultural heterogeneity among the different peoples. This second characteristic will be examined more fully in Chapter III of this section, dealing with Ngoni culture. To the factor of diversity within the Ngoni kingdoms should be added two other points made by the editors towards the end of their introduction where they said: 'Community of language and culture does not necessarily give rise to political unity, any more than linguistic and cultural dissimilarity prevents political unity.' In the next chapter we shall be discussing the relation of language and culture among the Ngoni, and between them and other Nyasaland peoples. The second point in the essay which is also applicable to the Ngoni kingdoms and their neighbours was stated in these terms: 'The overlapping and interlocking of societies is due to the fact that where political relations end is not the point at which all social relations cease.' The relevance of this statement to the Ngoni in Nyasaland has already been mentioned in connexion with the visiting which goes on between individuals from the Ngoni kingdoms and states. It

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

563 AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also 563 a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the 621 chiefs and *ahumuzana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status, established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions; and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of 128 interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a [184 consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations 121 of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy. Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual 563 pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms and in the secession states.

(a) *Kinship pattern*

611 Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-583 betweens and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage. An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A 593 strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of [586] a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother. 591 Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was sup-[592] ported by the house system whereby the male members of each house formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

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going on for years. The land was apparently unused by anyone on the Portuguese side of the boundary road, and the need for extra land for villagers living on the British side was urgent. The Portuguese authorities had been charging rent for the gardens, a shilling or so per small plot, which the Nyasaland men had paid after being threatened with confiscation of their crops. This prolonged struggle had tried everyone's temper and endurance, and when it was announced that it had been arranged that gardens might be hoed without payment, there was a great roar of applause. The *izinduna* gave them time to talk among themselves after this announcement, to work off pent-up feelings. The other popular item was that the Paramount would have his own agricultural show at Ncheu in the coming year. He had asked Government permission to hold it, which had been granted, and he had money in his treasury to pay the expenses. European officers would come and judge the exhibits and the best would be sent on to the all-Nyasaland show at Blantyre. This announcement was greeted with cheers, a number of questions were asked and much talk went on in the ranks.

This account of the Paramount's annual gathering illustrates several of the points made in the two texts quoted. It was the only formal occasion when the Paramount met as one body all those who bore authority in his territory under him. The kind of laws and regulations which were promulgated at these meetings were previously discussed by him with his officials and the chiefs, and their presence at his side, facing the assembly, made it clear to the people that the laws came from the Paramount and had the support of his subordinate chiefs. The freedom of discussion in the council gave anyone who had something to say the opportunity to stand up and say it. There was no sense of the business being put over quickly. The *izinduna* gave speakers time to express themselves, and allowed time to elapse for other speakers to get up. They were more lenient with the speakers at this meeting than they were with witnesses in the courts, and only once or twice in the sessions, which lasted six or seven hours, was a man addressed from the platform and told: 'Speak well that we may hear your words.'

This method of putting new laws and regulations before the people illustrated the concept of one law for all, and of one source of law-making within the territory, namely the Paramount, whom they saw before them as the centre of the group of chiefs and leaders. The procedure therefore gave strong support to the political structure, for it was only on the occasions of this assembly of all the Paramount's office-bearers that all those in authority could be seen together as an authority-wielding group, their relative importance being indicated by the order in which they sat. The procedure also gave support to the policy of political assimilation, for in that assembly of several thousand people, the great majority were not of trans-Zambesi clans, and therefore not acknowledged as Ngoni so far as tribal origin was concerned. They

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were, however, and they realized it at such assemblies, the people of the Paramount, and he was to them the visible symbol of their unity in one kingdom.

The Court System of the Ngoni

The enforcement of the laws as announced and discussed at these assemblies was the business of the courts, where the laws themselves were interpreted and often elaborated on occasions of an open breach.

The relationships of the courts in the kingdom followed the hierarchical pattern of the political organization. All minor cases were heard and, whenever possible, settled at the village level. If the plaintiff failed to get satisfaction, or if the village headman was unable to get his judgement accepted, he had to go with the litigants to the chief's court, and if he failed there, the case could be taken to the appeal court of the Paramount. There were certain cases, such as murder and witchcraft, which in pre-European days could only be dealt with in the Paramount's court.

Some confusion arose over the use of one term 'court' for every type of institution which exercised judicial functions. The Nyanja term used in central Ngoniland for the courts at the lowest level was *bwalo*, literally the open space in front of the *indlunkulu* in any Ngoni village. Nothing could be apparently more informal than the discussion among a group of senior men called together by the headman, on a verandah or under a big tree, in order to settle quarrels and hear complaints. No formal records were kept, there was no clerk, and there was no summing up or pronouncement of judgement. There was, if the meeting was successful, general agreement about the action necessary and about who ought to initiate action. Above the level of this village headman's court were the courts of the *akumuzana* held at their head villages, and above them again the chiefs' courts. After 1933 the courts of the *akumuzana* gave place to the courts at the head villages of the chiefs. The proceedings there were more formal and included presenting evidence, defending the case and pronouncing judgement on cases rather than, as in the villages, talking things over and appealing to certain principles to re-establish equilibrium and resolve disputes.

The Ngoni nevertheless always recognized these courts at the village level as an integral part of their system. It was the mark of a good headman that he should be able to settle the minor cases in his village without constant reference to higher authority. The majority of villages under Ngoni rule were villages of local tribes who had surrendered to, or been conquered by, the Ngoni. The headmen were therefore of the local tribe, as a rule surrounded by their kinsmen, and their position carried with it the necessity of relating local tribal custom, especially in matters involving marriage and family affairs, to the legal principles and procedure of the Ngoni courts. Many cases came before the courts in

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called 'to make a clean village', and were one of the results of the Paramount's visits to his area. They included building latrines, sweeping the open spaces round huts, disposing of rubbish, mending roofs and fences, smooth mudding of houses, digging wells. The Paramount appointed three men who were called *masanitari* to go round the villages to inspect and report to him, and instituted a system of fines for failure to carry out these measures. In addition to promoting clean villages, he ordered that cattle were to be dipped regularly, cultivation was to be carried out by a ridge system instead of mounds, and all sick people, especially women, were to attend hospital. He sent his own daughter to hospital for her confinement, and she attended the baby clinic regularly with her child.

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Some of the changes in local customs which the Paramount ordered were not so easy to enforce as the newer practices in relation to health and hygiene. He forbade drinking at night when quarrelling became rife; he prohibited Cewa dances such as *vinyau* and *malombo* and the Cewa female puberty rite of *cinamwali*. The only dances allowed were the Ngoni dance *ngoma*; the *ligubo* or war-dance at his village; and the individual hero's dance (*ligiya*) when a lion or leopard was brought to his village. Marriages had to be registered, and births and deaths recorded and reported to the Paramount when he visited the villages.

It was always possible to start an argument among the senior men sitting on the Paramount's *bwalo*, or on the steps of his court-house, either on the subject of how far Ngoni law and custom had replaced local Ntumba and Cewa custom, or on the advantages and disadvantages of the modern reforms of the Paramount. Some of the older men were anxious to establish that the Ngoni, meaning those of the trans-Zambesi clans, had not only achieved a political conquest but had also changed the practices of the local peoples and made them observe Ngoni customs. They used to assert, among other things, that the local people had become patrilineal, and had adopted a *lobola* form of marriage—statements which could easily be disproved and were laughed at by the onlookers. On the other hand, they were right when they said that Ngoni laws and court procedure were universally approved and followed, and that the younger generations at least were willing to carry out the welfare measures of the Paramount. One constant feature of all such discussions of recent changes was the steady support given by the Ntumba and Tengo clan leaders to the Paramount and his rule. This, more than any other feature, proved that the trans-Zambesi pattern of political rule had triumphed, and that in their loyalty to the Paramount and their practice of Ngoni custom the village headmen and their families could be counted on to support the rulers.

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CHAPTER I

NGONI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A BRIEF review was given in Chapter III of Part I of the main elements of Ngoni culture, analysed into 'patterns' covering kinship, village lay-out, ritual, ceremonial, and language. In this section we shall be considering the principal social institutions embodying Ngoni culture: their clans, houses, families and age sets. We shall find evidence in the two kingdoms of an extensive common element in the social organization which the Ngoni brought with them from the south. Some important diversities will be evident also, such as the variations in virilocal residence found in the central kingdom, and the less widespread practice there of *lobola* marriage. Those elements which were common to Ngoni social organization in both kingdoms were often those which distinguished Ngoni culture from that of the neighbouring peoples. Patrilineal descent, the house system, the ranking of clans, the *laweni* organization of boys' life and activities—these were all distinctively Ngoni, practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and sometimes adopted by individuals and families of other clans who had been associated with the Ngoni over long periods. Nevertheless, in many of the villages of the central kingdom there were clearly two cultures existing side by side: the Ngoni culture being that of an aristocratic minority and the local culture that of the majority, who in the kingdom were equally subjects of the Paramount but in their villages possessed inferior social status.

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Indications were to be seen, even in the more conservative and more isolated northern kingdom, that modern influences were affecting Ngoni social institutions. We have already noticed some of the effects of the cessation of warfare on a social system founded on military traditions. The exodus of young men from Ngoni villages to seek work elsewhere was very extensive, especially in the northern kingdom, where the level of education was higher but employment was not available, and this had repercussions on the age of marriage, the distribution of wealth, and the undertaking of family responsibilities, including the care of the old people. The gradual decline in polygyny, largely but not entirely due to the work of missions, was beginning to have its effects on the working of the house system and on the interrelations of the generations within the family group.

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In the 1930's many of these modern changes were appearing but the traditional institutions were still functioning, and the Ngoni leaders themselves were clear about those forms and activities which were distinctively their own.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

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Households[1]

	Total	Leading clan
Northern Ngoniland		
Eswazini	23	15
Endindeni	15	12
Eluhangeni	37	21
Central Ngoniland		
Cinkwita	39	18
Mangoso	60	26
Mcakhatha	122	37

The proportion of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in the central kingdom to the total population was lower than in the north. The figures given here, however, do not show the total number of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but only the households related on a kinship basis with the leading clan head.

Eswazini and Endindeni were both built in traditional Ngoni style in horse-shoe formation round a single kraal, with the *indlunkulu* [illegible] head of the kraal, and a recognized right-hand and left-hand group[illegible]ng. Eswazini had become the head village of the Sibande clan since its owner, Samson Sibande, on his father's death had gone out from his father's village and made this his *lusungulu* village. His big wife, of the royal clan, was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his mother, and there was another wife on the right and left hand. Of the older generation there was only one widow of his father, belonging to the same house as his mother. Of his generation there were five brothers, one of the same mother as Samson, and four sons of the surviving widow of his father. There was also the widow of a dead brother by the same mother. Two sisters of Samson were in the village, one married to the *induna* of his mother's house, whose family lived on the right-hand side of the kraal, and one a deserted widow who had returned to her brother's protection. All the village was one house, that of Samson's own mother.

Endindeni was a *gogo* village owned by Zibekere Makwakwa who was the son of a famous war *induna* and was of the *gogo* house of his father. His brother, who was the son of the big house, had moved out to his own village. The village was composed entirely of his family with the exception of an age mate with whom he had an *ubale* relationship, who lived with his two wives on the left-hand side of the kraal. Zibekere's big wife was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his own mother, and his second wife was also of her house. Of the older generation there was one widow of his father, and one widow of his father's brother; of his own generation, one younger brother of the same mother. There were four sons of his big wife and two of his second

[1] In all six villages the total number of households included two or more *lawoni*.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

wife. The village with its single kraal was 'of one house', and it was widely known as a good village by Ngoni standards, because, as the local people said, 'all the men are Makwakwa men'.

Eluhangeni was a *gogo* village where the spirit of Mtenje Jere, the son of a brother of Zwangendaba, was guarded. The kinship group of Mwanamdoko Jere, the owner of the village, were all of one house, that of his mother who was dead. Her place in the *indlunkulu* had been taken by his big wife who also inherited the guardianship of the spirit of Mtenje. There was one widow of his father in the village, but she had become a Christian and therefore could not guard the spirit. Mwanamdoko had two wives, and three widows of his brothers by the same mother were also in the village. One brother by another mother was the only one of his generation still alive and he had two sons and two grandsons living in the *cigodlo* behind the *indlunkulu*. All Mwanamdoko's family were grouped round one kraal. There were two other kraals with family groups round them in the village, one belonging to the *induna* of his dead mother, and one to an age mate who had been in his regiment. The *induna's* group belonged to the same house as Mwanamdoko, but the pattern of the three distinct groups each with its own kraal was more like that of the *banja* in the central kingdom.

In the central kingdom the relationships of the various groups in a village followed a different pattern from that in the north. Instead of the *lusungulu* and *gogo* characteristics where the family groups were integrated into houses, the southern pattern was that of a conquered village with the Ngoni element superimposed. In Cinkwita and in Mcakhatha the village headman and his family group had originally been conquered, then established as an outlying village, and finally chosen for the permanent settlement of a family group belonging to an Ngoni clan when they left the royal village after it broke up. In Cinkwita there were three kraals associated with three *banja*. Two of the *banja* belonged to kinship groups of Ntumba clans, and the head of one was known as the headman of the village. The head of the *banja* of Cinkwita Ndau, the Ngoni clan group, was his eldest son Wilkinson, whose wife was of a leading Swazi clan, the Magwagwa. His family group consisted of his wife, two sons and three daughters; a brother and his two daughters; the widow of a dead brother and his two sons and a daughter; three sisters, one of whom had married the brother of the village headman and one who was a widow; and a widowed sister of his father. This family grouping expressed in terms of households illustrates what has already been referred to several times, namely the tendency of the heads of leading Ngoni families in the central kingdom to keep, in addition to their sons, their sisters and daughters in the village after marriage, even when *lobola* had been given. It also illustrates the comparatively small number of plural marriages in the south among the younger men.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

boys and young men, so long as they were in the village. Ngoni men insisted that their children should be correctly trained, and they were contemptuous of Cewa and other tribal groups who left it 'all to the women'. The handing on of correct behaviour by the mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law was, they considered, essential, and one of the reasons why young men in the central kingdom liked to 'marry up' was that they could count on the careful grounding in all the canons of behaviour which their wives had received.

CHAPTER V

AGE SETS

The Ngoni brought with them to Nyasaland an age-set system akin to that among the South-eastern Bantu, which was an important element in their social structure. In pre-European days the division into cattle-herders or pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors or senior men, regulated the tasks and responsibilities of boys and men in other spheres besides those of warfare. At the beginning of this section, when reviewing age sets as one of the constituent forms of Ngoni social organization, I said that some features of an age-set system had persisted. In comparison with age-grouping in the other Nyasaland tribes it was distinctively Ngoni in form; it influenced behaviour patterns in inter-group and intra-group relations; and in it were recognized certain responsibilities and activities belonging to the different groups based on age.

Among the distinctively Ngoni elements in the age-set system were the private nature of the puberty ritual and the absence of initiation schools; the organization of boys' life in the *laweni*; the strong ties between age mates up to marriage; the selective principle in designating senior men and women as *madoda* and *manina*; and a different kind of selective principle in the formation of friendship pacts between individuals of the same age. In observing the role of age sets in Ngoni village society, the two main groups which were constantly in evidence as groups were the older boys and girls and the senior men and women. These groups not only carried out activities together, but also showed evidence of the strength of the internal ties linking members of an age set. There were, however, no sharp edges to these groups, either in terms of actual age or physiological development or of exclusive membership. The following list of terms applied to age sets in the two main Ngoni areas shows primarily the difference in designation between males and females according to broad age grouping, but it illustrates also the fact that the terminology applied to the age sets did not always coincide

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CHAPTER I

THE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS AND THE ARISTOCRATIC TRADITION

THIS section is not an account of Ngoni religion. It would require a study in itself to examine their beliefs about supernatural beings, their ideas on cosmogony, their concepts of the causes of disaster and sickness, their approach to and practice of forms of magic, and their attitude to witchcraft. Living in Ngoni villages, listening to individuals of different ages discussing prosperity and disaster, the seen and the unseen, the known and the feared, it was clear that it would be difficult to isolate a comprehensive system of beliefs and say that these were distinctively Ngoni beliefs concerning religion and magic and witchcraft. The observer was always aware of the intermingling of ideas and practices from the many Nyasaland tribal peoples who lived side by side and were in constant contact with one another in all those spheres of thought and action which demanded explanation and some remedial or therapeutic treatment. Among the Nyasaland tribes in the 1930's the influence of sixty years of Christian teaching by the missions played an important part, since the missions had introduced western medicine and education as well as a new religion and ethic, and so had influenced both thinking and action among their converts and their families.

In this complex situation it was virtually impossible to say: this is the Cewa religion, this is the Tumbuka cosmogony, this is Ntumba magic. It was nevertheless clear that there was an Ngoni cult of their ancestral spirits, which was not shared, in the form in which they practised it, by any of the neighbouring peoples, and the Ngoni had their own selective methods of relating it to Christian beliefs and practices. One reason why the Ngoni ancestor cult could be singled out as peculiar to them was its foundation in their aristocratic tradition. As long as the Ngoni political and social structure and organization survived, including the reciprocal roles of leading men and important women, the concept of houses with their ownership of cattle, and the role of the *gogo* house in maintaining tradition and carrying out ritual, the performance of the cult of ancestral spirits was assured. The eminent ancestors whose spirits were guarded in a village and who were known and remembered were addressed in times of trouble, and meat was offered to them as a form of sacrifice from the herd of cattle associated with the house to which they had belonged. This section will deal with the cult of ancestral spirits of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans who formed the political and social aristocracy. Thus, in the form described here, the cult is

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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ancestor cult in the head village of their clan. If they were asked 'How do you address the spirit (*tete idloni*)?' they gave the names and genealogy of the former heads of the clan and their attributes if they were known. If they were asked 'Where do you address the spirits?' the reply was always in terms of a particular village where a certain spirit was guarded.

The occasions on which the Swazi clan ancestors were addressed and sacrifices made were in cases of sickness of an important member of the clan. It was sometimes suggested that there might be trouble in the clan villages for which prayer should be made to the clan spirits, but when pressed the only specific instance informants could give was when the cattle did not thrive. They repudiated immediately any idea of prayer to the clan spirits in cases of drought or epidemics in the clan villages since those troubles, wherever they occurred, could only be helped by the spirits of the Paramounts who were concerned with all the land and all its people.

The procedure followed in the clan head village was the same as that for addressing the spirits of the Paramounts. In that village a diviner was consulted, he named the spirit who should be addressed, a beast was sacrificed and prayers were made. This was the Ngoni pattern of the ancestor cult, and it was limited to the Swazi and some of the trans-Zambesi clans. Its correct observance required that combination of cattle, houses, and known genealogies which only the leading clans possessed.

The living and the dead

At times such as funerals, and when talking about the ancestor cult, the Ngoni often used the phrase: 'Death cannot cut life.' They believed that human spirits had a continued existence after death, and that this existence was related to the place where they had dwelt, the people who were of their family and clan, and the cattle which belonged to their house and village. This continued association was not an automatic process. It had to be assured by the correct performance of the burial rites, the observance of stages of mourning and the deliberate 'bringing back' of the spirits to the village where it would be guarded and honoured when the final mourning ceremony was over.

In the Ngoni funeral rites there were distinctive elements in the burial of those belonging to Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In handling the corpse the legs were bent and drawn up to the body and the arms folded and crossed each side of the neck, so that the corpse seemed to be sitting and holding its head in its hands. It was wrapped in the skin of a newly killed beast. In the central kingdom men and women of Swazi clans were wrapped first in a sheep-skin, with a cow-skin put over it. The grave was a circular pit, with a small side chamber or shelf where the body was placed in a sitting position, propped up with large stones and facing south-east to the ancestral homeland. Personal possessions, such as skins and shields and baskets, were either put in the grave or taken to be

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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The relation of cattle-ownership to social integration, which was so marked a feature of Ngoni society, was limited to the Fwazi and trans-Zambesi clans. There was evidence that the acquisition of herds by former captives and by the local Cewa and other tribes created conflicts within the society. The following statement was made by an Ntumba village headman, commenting on several court cases relating to cattle-ownership. The reference in the last sentence is to the Ngoni practice in the ownership of cattle.

"Sometimes people say 'If your father was caught and was the slave of a certain person, and also if your mother was caught and was a slave of another man, then if you buy cattle and put them in the kraal of your father, those who caught your father say "These cattle are mine (or ours)." And those who caught your mother say "These cattle are ours." ' They all say so because it was they who caught your ancestors. So those cattle do not recognize their real owner. And sometimes those cattle do not bear well, and sometimes they just die.

Then perhaps you die and leave your cattle, and those people are quarrelling to find out who is the owner of those cattle, since there are three people who want those same cattle: your father, the one who caught your father, and the one who caught your mother.

And it is really best if there are many masters that you, a child, should not buy cattle, but just leave off because they are a source of trouble. But one who is a free man without any masters, he ought to buy cattle because there will be no trouble for him.

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Among the local Cewa tribes, when a man wanted to start a herd and had money to buy cattle, he was expected to give the money to his *makwa* (mother's brother) who then bought the cattle and took charge of them and regarded them as his.[1] This assertion of ownership of cattle bought with another man's money was part of the services to which the mother's brother was entitled from his sister's children, in return for services which he had performed or would perform for them. If these relationships between a man and his *makwa* were not working smoothly and the *makwa* was not helping his nephew, there was a tendency for the man to turn to his own father and give him the money, and vest the ownership of the cattle in him, often because the father had paid the school fees or a court fine for his son. When the *makwa* realized that his position had been usurped and that his chance of owning cattle had gone, his dislike of the man's father and his family showed itself in jealousy and quarrels between the two individuals and friction between the families. The Cewa matrilineal *mbumba* as a cattle-owning group under a senior man had not the continuity of the Ngoni house, for an *mbumba* was said to be 'finished' when a woman and all

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[1] The Cewa believed that if cattle were to survive and increase, they had to be owned and cared for by senior men. On the highlands around Dedza the Cewa had had cattle before the Ngoni came.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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Military Service, obedience to the law,
recognition of the Paramount's supremacy were therefore the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by handing over cattle, which established the offspring as 'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilineal descent and inheritance through the male line, and patrilocal residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a 'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth was membership of a 'house', the social group of male members of Ngoni families with their wives and children round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house' and the men remained in it for life, the women until their marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, consisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, descendants of one or more former warriors in the same regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after the British had taken over the country. In such villages the cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered themselves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only because they had been conquered, but because they disliked and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were reinforced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage.

The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni elements in the village, as well as from external European influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages, and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni families who had married into the village, thus combining the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The third element was the number and influence of senior women of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village, or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group, many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every stage of the children's development.

Life in two Ngoni villages

I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background for the following chapters, the main features of two villages, in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for a few weeks.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of this book, especially Chapters IV and V will show how the organization of Ngoni society and the cultural way of living in it, necessarily surrounded the life of children and the training given to them with a much wider horizon. We shall talk about the family, the household, the village as the setting of Ngoni child life, but these terms have to be interpreted according to the Ngoni social organization, sketched very briefly in Chapter I and set out at length in my earlier book *The Ngoni of Nyasaland*. Looked at from another angle, we can see that a young child's horizon in Ngoni villages was limited at first to what he saw around him and the people who had daily or frequent contact with him and who understood and supplied his daily needs. But that circle of people forming a young child's contacts was from the beginning much wider than the individual family which a child was born into. When he began to run about and to pass beyond the restricted confines of the household, it was as we shall see, the duty and responsibility of all Ngoni adults to notice his behaviour and correct him when necessary.

The relationships inside the large Ngoni families, between one family and another in a Ngoni village, with related families in other villages, with all members of the same clan living in an area—these were threads in the web of kinship and clanship which united the Ngoni people. These threads were also inseparable from the political links between the people and their territorial chief, and between the whole people and the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The difference, however, between the Ngoni kingdom under the Paramount which included all his subjects of Ngoni and non-Ngoni ethnic groups, and the Ngoni aristocracy in the villages was a profound difference. It was the latter who understood, appreciated and sought to hand on to their children Ngoni ways of living based on Ngoni values. Hence in most villages there were sharp distinctions between standards of behaviour within Ngoni families and in non-Ngoni families.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

194 families. It was, however, demanded from Ngoni children
563 that they should behave in the socially approved manner to
[867] everyone, and not only to their Ngoni kin and fellow clansmen. And it was evident in non-Ngoni families that there was often some attempt to teach Ngoni standards of behaviour to their children, but that such attempts broke down when their family system was not organized to enforce the necessary training.

576 *The goals of Ngoni child training*

577 Ngoni adults, and especially the senior men and women who
[867] were in control of the training of children and themselves deeply conscious of the traditional values of their society, summed up the aims of the upbringing of children in one word 'respect'. The vernacular term *ulemu*—in the old Ngoni language *hlonipa*—is a concept very difficult to translate adequately, certainly to convey its full meaning in a single English word or phrase. The nearest terms are honour and respect, and though in some contexts it is often translated as politeness, that is too limited a term. In fact they had another vernacular term to express courtesy which was to them one way of showing respect. The concept of *ulemu* included the recognition that a particular person or office was entitled to honour; that all behaviour to that person must express respect; and that by showing respect in language, posture and action, a child or adult so behaving, shared in that honour which they were acknowledging. Conversely, through failing to convey respect, a person, whether child
[559] or adult, was 'ashamed' and lost face accordingly. I have just said that a particular person was entitled to honour and therefore to respect in the behaviour of others. The Ngoni said that was the origin of the concept, and it was demonstrated in the punctilious observance of etiquette to all chiefs, and to all leading men and women by everyone else.
[858] But there was an extension of this concept to include all older people, and Ngoni children were expected to show

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

young wife, an Ngoni husband would not normally support her against his own mother. In the case of his child, who was born a member of his family, house and clan, his mother and her circle of senior women had uncontested sway.

The second features of Ngoni social organization which the 'arrival of a new stranger' demonstrated was the women's interest in and capacity for planning and organization. The senior women had no doubt about what steps to take and who should take them, from the time when labour began till after weaning. The preparations for the birth, the receiving of the child, the care of mother and baby after birth, the ritual cleansing of the hut, the presentation of the child to the public—all these acts up to and including weaning were planned with what seemed an elaborate organization when first observed, but which turned out to be standard Ngoni practice. Two particular aspects of this organization stood out as different from the local practices: the provision for artificial feeding of the child, and the role played by nurse girls and women helpers.

The main variants in this pattern arose from three causes: the effect of marriage with women of other ethnic groups who married into Ngoni families and had to accept the pattern of authority imposed by the house organization of Ngoni women. They therefore had to follow in its main lines the procedures we have described for the birth and care of infants. But Ngoni men and women deplored in particular two non-Ngoni elements which were creeping into the conduct of birth and post-natal ceremonies. One was the attitude taken during difficult labour when the women attending to the mother tried to force her to confess to illicit sexual relations which the non-Ngoni believed to be the cause of the delayed birth. The other was the prohibition on a wife putting salt in the food she was cooking while she was menstruating or at any other ritually unclean period. The true Ngoni despised this salt taboo and the women of Ngoni families did not practise it.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

2. *Growing up in New Guinea.* Kegan Paul, 1939—Penguin, 1954. These were two pioneer studies in the Pacific.
3. *New Worlds for Old.* Gollancz, 1956. The New Guinea area was revisited after 25 years. See especially chapters V, XIII and XIV for Dr. Mead's assessment of her former study.

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2. *Education and Social Change in Tropical Areas.* Nelson, 1955. See especially the papers on Anthropology and Education (page 68), and Cultural Contacts in Education (page 96).
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II

DEFINITIONS

CULTURE, the total way of living of a people, including kinship relations, economy, religion and magic, law, government, language, myths, child training etc.

ETHNIC GROUP, used here instead of tribe because the Ngoni kingdoms and villages included several tribes. (See Ngoni of Nyasaland p. 1–6).

CLAN, exogamous group related through male line with a common clan name used in address. True Ngoni clans formed the aristocracy (See Ngoni of Nyasaland p. 116).

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

Informants are agreed that in the old days young men and women married whom they were told and never attempted to make their own choice against their parents' will. From evidence available this seems to be an oversimplification. It seems likely that individual choice mattered less in those days than it does now, but it cannot have been entirely inoperative. It is said that each regiment of men used to flirt with its corresponding women's regiment, and that marriages sometimes followed. Wiese says that among the aristocratic families a woman had the right to choose her own husband, but that this right was dying out and it was becoming the practice to marry off daughters so as to secure the most marriage cattle and maintain upper-class endogamy.[3] It is true that on the evidence of genealogies there do not seem to have been many marriages between very aristocratic women and the most recently captured men, and that therefore we are justified in assuming a tendency towards upper-class endogamy, but this tendency seems not to have been very strong and indeed there never was a clear-cut upper class but instead a method of ranking families in terms of ethnic origin. My informants never suggested that a man would marry his daughter so as to bring in as many cattle as possible, and it seems unlikely that this was ever a common motive.[4]

A girl was expected to be chaste before she was married. From the procedure adopted by the Zulu and from information from other Ngoni groups, it seems likely that girls were examined at marriage to check that they had not been deflowered. Rattray records this among the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland,[5] and Read makes a similar statement.[6] My own informants had such faith in the sexual rectitude of the past as contrasted with the promiscuity of the present that it was difficult to establish what they really thought happened. It seems that unmarried people were allowed intercourse *inter crura* and that this was considered not a violation of chastity. The whole question has been obscured by the conflict of values between the South-Eastern Bantu leaders, whose view appeared to have prevailed at the time, and the recent captives from the Cewa and kindred peoples, who believed that a girl would die if she did not copulate at puberty. We shall see the outcome of this conflict when we come to discuss modern marriage.

As might be anticipated in a system in which marriage is a transfer of fertility, a wife was expected to be fertile. If she was barren special procedures were adopted to validate the substance of the marriage. A man could appeal to his wife's relatives for another

[3] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedigao . . .', p. 473 and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.
[4] See below, p. 120.
[5] Rattray, *Some folk-lore stories and songs in Chinyanja, with English translation and notes*, S.P.C.K., 1907, p. 115.
[6] Margaret Read, 'The Moral code of the Ngoni and their former military state', *Africa*, xi (1938), p. 6.

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Case history 1

Amos[9] was married to Eve and wished to offer bridewealth for her. Amos's father prevented him, saying that the marriage of Amos's sister with Eve's father's son had not yet proved a success and and he did not want at this stage to bind himself any further to Eve's kinsfolk.

There are no exogamous clans among the Ngoni but sometimes an agnatic lineage has a distinctive descent-name, giving it the appearance of an exogamous clan. Kinship terms are used within the lineage and members may not marry one another. As, however, descent is not usually traced, either actually or putatively, beyond the grandparents of adults these exogamous groupings are small and do not persist in time.

Tribal preferences are not marked. In the past the Ngoni were prepared to capture and incorporate into their society anyone who came in their path. At the same time there was an association of South-Eastern Bantu origin with high rank, although this was never developed into a rigid system of ethnic ranking. Nowadays Ngoni live in the midst of people from other tribes, in the adjacent reserves, on the tobacco farms, in Fort Jameson township and at the urban centres. A man may sometimes be ridiculed if he marries a Cewa girl but many men do so, particularly if they live in Cewa-speaking villages under Ngoni chiefs. Wealthy Cewa men from Cewa chiefdoms who wish to bequeath their property to their sons sometimes marry Ngoni women and offer bridewealth for them, hoping thereby to prevent their sister's sons disputing the inheritance. There are many men on farms and in the township coming from distant areas whose tribe may be uncertain or unknown but who manage to marry Ngoni girls. The only strong antagonism is against the Nyasaland Yao. Yao find it difficult to marry into aristocratic Ngoni families and even when they do their rights are never certain. The Yao are regarded by the Ngoni as clever sorcerers and are thought to have an excess of sexual vigour.

A few women become the concubines of European or Indian men. Such unions lack much of the substance of marriage, although the *man sometimes makes a present to the woman's relatives which is* interpreted as a marriage payment. These men are not usually concerned with establishing the validity of the marriage, if marriage it is. They cannot take action against their wives in the Native Courts, nor can they hope for redress in the Administration's courts. Although the Administration assists women to secure maintenance of the children, it does not recognize these unions as legal marriages. In vernacular speech they are referred to as marriages and, despite the protestations in recent years of more sophisticated Africans, these women are not despised in the rural areas. A woman who

[9] All personal names in this paper are fictitious. I have used Biblical names as these are common among the Ngoni. Where an individual is mentioned in more than one case history I have retained the same fictitious name throughout.

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True Ngoni.

(1) *Jere*, the clan of Songandaw, which includes also chiefs Mzakambewa, Mzeostengenji, Zamutyuia and Chitete. *Jere* means a bangle; but the name is said to be derived from the words of Songandawe when he crossed the Zambezi with all his prisoners, "Ningujere," or "We are many." Members of the clan did not eat or kill the domestic pigeon, because when surrounding a village they attached burning barkcloth to these birds which, when released, flew on to the houses and set them on fire.

(2) *Gama* (Maliwa). (3) *Mgomezulu* (Chitambalala). (4) *Nkhosi* (Njolomole).

Of the Soto Tribe.

(1) *Mzgoni*. (2) *Mlipa* (Mvuyani)

Of the Swazi Tribe.

(1) *Nyasenga* (Mjawi). (2) *Gwai* (Chisenga). (3) *Mangatewa* (Mtwazani). (4) *Mafolaka* (Kadzuan). (5) *Gwazu* (Zembezi).

Of the Thonga Tribe.

(1) *Zombo* (Marumbuka). (2) *Inkomo* (Kalanikalo). (3) *Sungwazi* (Ndawambi). (4) *Mpamalo* (Mapilani). (5) *Songu* (Machila). (6) *Maliaga* (Mtekateka).

Of the Kalanga Tribe.

(1) *Hara* (Mahanjira). (2) *Moy*, meaning heart (Mundolilo). Members of these two clans might not eat the heart or liver, or drink the blood of any animal. (3) *Sole*, a monkey, (Chikazi). They might not eat monkeys, or baboons, or any food plucked by them. (4) *Nzou* (Chikye II). (5) *Shawa* (Nakutepa). Tabu: the eland. (6) *Hondo* (Kalichero). (7) *Mapala* (Simakumi).

Of the Songu Tribe.

(1) *Mvula*, meaning rain (Ndziwa). (2) *Khinda* (Zimamba). (3) *Longu* (Chiponda). (4) *Mumba* (Phiri). (5) *Itwara* (Chingwo). (6) *Sakala* (Chimongo). (7) *Mwendya* (Mgulu). (8) *Nguruwe*, meaning a bushpig, which was tabu, as was also any foodstuff *uprooted by bushpigs.* (Mzukuzu II.) (9) *Ngwena* (Dzimazumaleka). (10) *Shawa* (Chidzuya). (11) *Mbe* (Mumbo). (12) *Tembo* (Chikumumbu). (13) *Kunda* (Gwiremi). (14) *Njobwa*, meaning an elephant, the meat of which was prohibited. To this clan belong Chiefs Chiwere, Mulimanja and Makarasi. (15) *Mbewa* (Funzani II). (16) *Makoko* (Mkwintengwenji). (17) *Mkwazi* (Chimangamwasa). (18) *Mkwaja* (Wata).

Of the Tumbuka Tribe.

(1) *Ngalonde* (Gwiremi). (2) *Chirwa*. (3) *Chunga*.

Of the Senga Tribe.

(1) *Mankoswa* (Mpezeni). (2) *Senga* (Manjaka).

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Of the Mandawire Tribe.

(1) *Chimbalo* (Chimbalanga).

Of the Sukuma Tribe.

(1) *Nthewa*, meaning the frame put over an antheap. Tabu: termites (Kamkwamba, Yekoniya). (2) *Chisi* (Kampimbi, Funsani). (3) *Mpkepo* (Lichapa). (4) *Chipeta* (Chinyanya). (5) *Chinsa* (Njumbula). (6) *Ng'ombe* (Manyusa). (7) *Chiku* (Dumbo). (8) *Liwinda* (Kalinda). (9) *Mlenje* (Mgubo).

Of the Tonga Tribe. (A tribe allied to the Atumbuka living in the North of Nyasaland, not to be confused with the Aba-thonga south of the Zambezi).

(1) *Manda*. (2) *Nikata*.

M 575 535 [825] [764] [881]

3. *Secret Societies: the Vinyau.*

N [575] [177]

The word *vinyau* (sing. *chinyau*) signifies "representations of animals." It serves also as the name of a dance in which large figures of grass and wicker, masks and other disguises play the principal part. This dance has a wide range and has long been performed by the Achewa in connexion with funerals. Latterly it has been introduced into initiation ceremonies as well. It is not danced by the Ngoni or Tumbuka tribes to the north; but the Dowa Angoni, who have not preserved their own nationality, tribal forms and customs to any great extent, have adopted it generally for funerals and sometimes for initiations. The most prevalent explanation of its origin is that when God made the country and its people He also instituted the *vinyau*. Consequently, the life of the people is bound up with it, and its secrets must be guarded zealously, initiates being warned that if they disclose them, not only will they themselves perish, but also their fathers and mothers and all their relations with them.

M [114] [775]

In 1907 Captain R. S. Rattray referred to this dance in his "Folk Lore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja," pp. 178 and 179, and expressed the opinion that it was undoubtedly in some way connected with totemism, the grass animals being reincarnations of the dead. He observed that the secrets were scrupulously kept, and that natives accustomed to speak freely on their other customs refused absolutely to discuss the *vinyau*. During the last twenty years of contact with European civilization, its devotees have greatly increased in number; the dance itself

M [178]

has diverged to some extent from its original purpose and degenerated into a mere amusement; and the educated native of to-day does not believe so readily in the mysterious properties of a grass animal, and is therefore comparatively ready to impart his knowledge on the subject.[1]

M [171]

[1] Dr. Stannus makes a brief reference to the *vinyau*, and in Harvard African Studies III, *loc. cit.*, p. 252, he describes one of the corresponding Yao *unyago* figures, viz., the *nembanda*, which is a "representation of an animal made of bark on a framework covered with mud and painted with flour in spiral markings, hence the name (*nkanda* is part of a spiral shell from the Zanzibar coast much prized by natives as an ornament)." In the following pages he gives a list of the other *unyago* figures, nearly all of which represent various animals, and states that they are used at the *lupondo* (initiation of boys) for instructional purposes, the Wayao denying any totemic origin. The Yao word *unyago* is, of course, the same as the Chewa *vinyau*.

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political and military organization into an effective group. What meaning, therefore, can we give to the term 'Ngoni', and how can this group which calls itself Ngoni be analysed into its component parts?

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM 'NGONI' MEAN? The references made hitherto show that the term 'Ngoni' is used in several different connotations. It is, strictly speaking, an historical linguistic term, and referred originally to that group of clans described as 'Nguni' because they spoke a language classified to-day as the Nguni dialects.[1] Somewhere on the march north the Ngoni changed the *u* to an *o*, and arrived in their present areas saying 'We are Ngoni'. They assert emphatically that it was on the march they began to say 'We are Ngoni', and they suggest that it was important to have some general term to cover individuals from many mixed groups.

The name Ngoni having been assumed on the march north, it obviously at first only covered those clans which were of true southern origin, or as we should say to-day, of Zulu or Swazi stock. This is the meaning which Ngoni still has when used in its narrow or strict sense to-day. In collecting the clan names in a village, for example, the headman says 'Those are Ngoni, those are Makalanga, those are Nsenga', and so on. The true Ngoni clans are those most highly honoured, the real aristocrats, and a little experience teaches the field worker to recognize their bearing as they walk about among the rest. In a village containing several clans, the houses of the Ngoni clans occupy the most honourable places in the middle of the horse-shoe formation surrounding the cattle kraal. In any meeting at a chief's village the men and women of Ngoni clans sit nearest to the chief and drink beer before the rest. This ranking by clans, however, does not stop at the true Ngoni. They lead the hierarchy, but other clans also claim precedence in a rough geographical order of the tribes absorbed from south to north. The true Ngoni illustrate this by saying, 'In old days the only men who were made *indunas* were those of the Swazi, Zulu, Suto, and Tonga clans. After we settled here, *indunas* were made from the Makalanga, Nsenga, and Sukuma clans'. There is therefore

[1] See *Bantu Studies*, Sept. 1934, for classification of the South African languages. Also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, for list of Nguni clans.

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a hierarchy of rank expressed in the clan names, and this rank is evident in the position of houses on a village site, and the degree of authority exercised by the clans and the respect[1] accorded to them. In effect, all those whose ancestors were absorbed before the final break up of the main Ngoni group are recognized as having some claim to the name Ngoni. The rest, that is the clans found in the areas where the Ngoni finally settled are, or rather were, regarded as conquered or slave people.

We have seen, however, that there is a much wider sense in which the term Ngoni is used—that is, by all who live under the rule of the Paramount Chief. This extended usage is due to the prestige and honour in which the stricter meaning of Ngoni is held. It was illustrated in the instance of the Nyasaland men in Johannesburg, who all claimed to be Ngoni because they had discovered at once that the name commanded respect among the mixture of tribes to be found on the mines. *Indunas* and other leading men sometimes make use of this wider connotation when boasting about the large numbers of people owning allegiance to the Ngoni Paramount Chief, compared with the other petty chieftainships. 'All those in the country of Mpezeni are Ngoni. All are his people.' At the same time they make it clear that there is a distinction between the real Ngoni and the other subjects of the Paramount—a distinction which formerly was much sharper than it is to-day. All are the people of the Paramount, it is true, but in old days the majority of the non-Ngoni were called slaves. To this day the Ngoni when angry may call out to some one, 'Chewa, Chewa', implying 'Slave, slave', and be hauled to the chief's court for insulting language. There the chief will take pains to point out that there are no slaves to-day, and that no Ngoni must 'spoil the country' by insulting the people of the Paramount.

It is, I think, clear that there is a connotation in which the term Ngoni can be used with some degree of scientific accuracy—that is, to cover all those clans which are not belonging to the local tribes, or, in an even stricter sense, the clans of indubitably southern origin.

[1] This word 'respect' is constantly in use among the Ngoni. It implies both 'honour' and 'fear', and they sometimes use one word and sometimes the other. It really means, 'to give a person his due', that is, to behave towards him (or her) in the manner which his rank requires.

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We have also to recognize that the wider connotation of the word is in constant use to-day, and it will be apparent in the course of this article that those who like to be thought Ngoni but have no real claim to the name, find ways in which to identify themselves with the real Ngoni, and to impress upon outsiders that they share the distinction of that name.

III. NGONI SOCIETY AS A CULTURAL UNIT. It is evident that the field worker who tries to describe and analyse the society which is found in the Ngoni areas to-day has some difficulty in establishing appropriate and correct terms. Here is a society which is a compound of ethnic units, subdivided into clans according to kinship, stratified into ranks, held together by a ruling aristocracy and a strong centralized political organization. This society differs radically from that of a homogeneous community where the sociological structure has gone through a long process of integration or disintegration, or has remained static over a period of time. The Ngoni created their 'state', that is, their present political and social units, within a relatively short period by a series of deliberate acts. They brought with them a pattern of society from the south; they modified[1] it during their forty odd years of wandering and warfare; and they moulded it finally when they settled in their present areas. Within this deliberately created social structure the principles of centralization and rank were dominant. Based on these two principles the Ngoni set up, in an alien milieu, the institutions of chieftainship,[2] of military training, of systematized law courts, of recognized ranks in society, of patrilineal succession and inheritance, speaking among themselves a language foreign to the country. The resultant society, a compound of the Ngoni ruling aristocracy and the conquered indigenous people, formed the Ngoni state. So conscious was all this social engineering that old men to-day can give detailed accounts of the various processes, political, legal, military, by which the conquerors and conquered were brought under one rule.[3] Borrowing a term from European history,

[1] One striking modification was the replacing of the village as a small kinship group by villages of hundreds of huts, with an elaborate organization into hamlets.

[2] Using chieftainship in the sense of the Ngoni *inkosi* whose office and powers were very different from those of the surrounding petty chiefs.

[3] As one of these processes, the piercing of the ear-lobes became the 'tribal

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serve their own culture, so that they were not submerged in the very different cultures round them? The Ngoni themselves give the answer to this first question, saying, 'We fought with spears and shields; those others had only bows and arrows and sometimes guns.'[1] The making of these shields, which formerly gave courage and protection to the warriors, is to this day almost a ritual. To watch a chief working at one on the threshold of his hut, or a village headman and his friends cutting and shaping one in the kraal, is to realize the value put on them by the Ngoni. They refuse to make them for sale as curiosities, and several Europeans have told me that they have tried in vain to get one.

Having conquered by the shield and spear, the Ngoni maintained their prestige by their highly developed political organization. All around them were small chieftains owning a few villages with no integration in any large political unit.[2] The Ngoni state was focussed in the *inkosi*, the Paramount Chief, who was at once the 'owner'[3] of the land, the 'head'[3] of the state, and the 'father'[3] of his people. The Ngoni, as we have seen, are always ready to indicate those institutions and related traditions which mark them off from the surrounding tribes, and which give their state a cultural reality of its own. They point first to their language and their traditions of Dingiswayo, Zwidi, and Chaka as proving their southern origin. Other neighbouring peoples have vague traditions of wandering from north to south, or west to east, but the Ngoni know exactly where they came from and by what route. Their language is almost identical with old Zulu. I was told by many Europeans that it hardly existed any longer, and I was therefore surprised to find to what an extent it is still spoken and used. Most of the true Ngoni to-day are bilingual[4]; with the exception of a few very old Ngoni people, everyone to-day speaks one of the local vernaculars, Nsenga, Tumbuka, or Chewa.[5] Ngoni is the language of the aristocrats, and a large proportion of the true

[1] The kind of antique guns traded to the Chewa by the Portuguese and Arabs were no match for the Ngoni skill with the long throwing-spear or the short stabbing-assegai, and the bullets were such that the stout cow-hide shields of the Ngoni could withstand them. Hence the consternation of the Ngoni when the machine-gun bullets of the British troops pierced their shields in the Ngoni 'war'.

[2] With the possible exception of Chikuramayembe, Chief of the Henga.

[3] Translations of vernacular terms.

[4] Or trilingual if they know English too.

[5] The same as Nyanja.

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Ngoni understand and speak it. It is in fact one of the distinguishing marks between the true Ngoni and the rest. It is convenient for a chief to be able to exchange a few remarks with a relative or an important visitor in a language which the onlookers cannot follow, and I have also heard a chief do the same with one of his *indunas* during a case in court. When I played Zulu records on my gramophone the aristocrats and old warriors drew near to listen, while the nobodies who could not understand fell back naturally. It is interesting to see how this language test brings out the social distinctions based on family and rank, and produces generally an inferiority reaction among the non-Ngoni.

As other distinguishing institutions the Ngoni point out their dances[1] and songs; their former military organization with its related system of age grades; their political organization under the Paramount Chief with his hierarchy of *amakosana*, *abalumuzana*, *izinduna*, *amanxusa*, &c.; the system of courts, again a hierarchy, with the laws administered in them; their village organization which still preserves the division into *izigawa* or hamlets, characteristic of the very big Ngoni villages of old days; the Ngoni code of ethics, differing radically from the code of the neighbouring tribes, with its insistence on truth, chastity, and personal discipline; and their patrilineal descent in clans and inheritance of property. This last, superimposed upon the local matrilineal and matrilocal tribes, has created a variety of forms of marriage and inheritance which is almost the despair of the field worker. The Ngoni say proudly, 'We taught them to honour their sons' when pointing out how nephew succession has to a large extent given way before filial succession. The values inherent in certain Ngoni institutions have spread beyond their own areas, for one Chewa Paramount Chief told me he had for long admired the Ngoni system of filial succession and inheritance, and was now trying, in the teeth of much opposition, to introduce it into his country.

After I had been a little while among the Ngoni, and their chiefs and leading men had begun to realize my aim in field work, I was surprised by the help they gave me and the amount of co-operation they showed in my enquiries. Then one day an old *induna* revealed

[1] One Ngoni Paramount has prohibited any but Ngoni dances to be danced in his country.

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work in Southern Rhodesia and the Union. This exodus to the south in its turn brought the Ngoni into touch once more with the Matabele, the Zulu, and the Swazi, and reawakened their consciousness of their southern origin. It is significant that just at the point when their power in their own country received a crushing blow, they came into contact once more in the south with the stock from which they had sprung and to whom they could still speak in their own language. The anthropologist who looks for the reason why the distinctive Ngoni culture did not die out entirely after their military defeat and the advent of the whites, can see at least part of the reason supplied by the results of this economic exodus to work in the south. When the other tribes in the neighbourhood were, in the Ngoni phrase, 'running always to the Boma' and incidentally picking up fragments of European customs, the Ngoni remained, according to their own account, to a great extent aloof and were strengthened in this aloofness by their renewed southern connexions.

Ngoni supremacy over the country was at an end. The Europeans were the overlords of all the tribes, not the Ngoni. Instead of one big chief in the country, many small ones were now recognized who dared to give themselves airs because they knew the Ngoni could not compel allegiance to their Paramount. Chewa people living under Ngoni chiefs could no longer be forced to stay there, therefore a different attitude towards them was necessary. 'Chewa' could no longer be synonymous with 'slave'. I have heard Ngoni chiefs in court address their *indunas* and headmen many times on behaving well to people of other tribes 'Or they will leave us and to-day we cannot make them return'. A recent case in which a young chief, but a very important one, was summoned to the Paramount's court for insulting a Chewa woman, was made the occasion by the Paramount for a long public discourse on the present relations between Ngoni and Chewa, pointing out that an Ngoni chief whose Chewa subjects left him would 'spoil his country' and 'all his people would be ashamed'. Ngoni prestige, in fact, having lost the support of military power, had to rely on other sanctions. In their own eyes, their prestige was still due to their southern origin, their success in creating the Ngoni state in an alien milieu, and those distinctive institutions which they had retained. To the surrounding people, to the Chewa and other tribes,

Ngoni prestige depended partly on the very effective justice meted out in the courts,[1] and also on the unquestioning allegiance of all subordinate authorities to the Paramount Chief. A Chewa Paramount Chief told me that he envied the power and prestige of the Ngoni Paramount, ' because all his chiefs obey him ', and there is undoubtedly a widespread admiration among the less united local tribes for the centralized political organization of Ngoni, and the fact that they can hold a large area and many people together as an effective unit.

The Ngoni, therefore, in the course of the last thirty-five years have to a large extent made the adjustments necessary to their changed relations with the local peoples. They have accepted the new situation *de facto*, though they do not necessarily acquiesce in heart. They still think they are due a unique position among the tribes, and for this reason they dwell continually on the glories of *chamtendere*. Nor does the adoption of some measure of European ways reconcile them to a different attitude. Even educated Ngoni teachers and ministers have said to me with deep regret, ' We are ashamed because we are being ignored to-day by other tribes '.

Their attitude towards Europeans is also partly based on the European failure to accord them a unique position among the tribes, or at least to acknowledge their former unique position. This, to them, is a cause for feeling ashamed. They are ashamed too because the land, except in the Reserves, is no longer theirs, and they have to submit to taxation. ' To pay taxes, that is our war to-day ', and something of the old martial spirit is evident in the young men who successfully evade the tax collectors, where the tax is collected directly by the Government, as in Mpezeni's country. In Gomani's country, on the other hand, where taxes are collected through the chiefs and headmen, though the men groan at having to find the money, they do not attempt to evade it, first because it would be useless, and secondly because they acknowledge the right of the chiefs to collect dues from them.

Any generalization about the Ngoni attitude to white people would be inaccurate without much detailed explanation, for which there is no space here. It is true though, I think, that at least in Mpezeni's country and possibly in the others, too, the Ngoni have not yet willingly made

[1] It is said that it is useless to bribe Ngoni chiefs and councillors.

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charged by him with specific functions relating to the State as a whole, and appear to have exercised general jurisdiction. Other lieutenants were known as the lieutenants of such-and-such a royal village, and were appointed by Mpezeni to look after the queens of the village and to be responsible for the internal ordering of the village.

In addition to these lieutenants each important person had a deputy,[1] who was a patrilineal kinsman of the same generation. Each new holder of the principal office selected his own deputy. The deputy's task was to act for his principal in his absence and to serve as an intermediary between the principal and his lieutenants.

All these posts were hereditary in the agnatic line, except for that of deputy, but new posts were continually being created and the holders of other posts fell into disgrace. Some of the lieutenants of Mpezeni were also headmen of their own villages, while other lieutenants were promoted to be regional governors.

Increase in population led to increase in the number of villages and of recognizable divisions within villages, both by divisional fission and by the setting up of separate establishments for groups of wives. This process, operating in response to population pressure from below, was assisted from above by the need to give newly created lieutenants and governors their own dependants and their own recognizable residential cluster.

The relative position and importance of a segment of the political structure might alter if its leader was killed in battle or if he offended the Paramount. For example, a certain lieutenant who had a village of his own committed adultery with one of Mpezeni's queens. He was put to death, and all his followers were made to come and live in a royal village. But in addition to the natural increase in the population of any segment, new members were added by capture in war. There was never any distinct class of slaves or captives in the Ngoni State. Apart from the aristocratic families which traced their history back to the pre-migration period in Natal, the rest of the tribe had been either captured at one time or other on the way north, or had joined the Ngoni of their own volition. On capture, people were assigned to some or other important person, and after a while acquired a certain autonomy of their own. The men were all enrolled into the age-set regiment appropriate to their age, and it was possible for them to rise to high positions in the State. No distinction of ethnic origin was

[1] *Mfumu*, pl. *mwene*. Cf. the Zulu term *umnumzane*, younger brother who is next to the heir.

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made in the regimental system, which was organized on a national basis. A person of low ethnic status, that is, of comparatively late incorporation into the tribe but of senior regiment, was considered to be, in most circumstances, as good as a man of more aristocratic family but of a junior regiment. New regiments were formed about every four years.

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Development of Minor Chieftainships

The defeat of the Ngoni army at the hands of the British in 1898 and the subsequent establishment of British control led to the partial breakdown of this system. The population was dispersed by the fighting and by the unsettled conditions that followed, and part of the kingdom was cleared for European occupation. The Administration recognized the grandson of Mpezeni I as the chief of the tribe, and also worked through a number of men known as Divisional Headmen, who were made responsible for small areas. Some of these divisional headmen were regional governors, some lieutenants of Mpezeni, some members of the royal lineage, and others were upstarts. It is not clear from the rather meagre records that remain or from the statements of informants exactly what happened between 1898 and 1914, but we know that by the latter date the Administration had come to recognize six men as local chiefs, apart from Mpezeni, and that four of them were said to be sons of Mpezeni I.[1] In 1929, when the term Native Authority was introduced, nine minor chiefs were appointed, of whom four were descended from Mpezeni I and one from the father of Mpezeni I. Two of the other minor chiefs have the descent-name *jere* that belongs to the royal lineage, and may be regarded as belonging to assimilated lineages. One is descended from a regional governor, the other from a policeman. Two minor chiefs do not have this descent-name, one being descended from a lieutenant of Zwangendaba and the other from a regional governor. This arrangement of one Paramount Chief and nine minor chiefs persists to the present day. With each of the ten chiefs is associated a more or less defined area within which most of the villages are said to belong to the chief of the area. What appears to have happened during the thirty years after the conquest is that the central power declined and that certain political and territorial segments achieved a degree of autonomy. The ten areas belonging to the different chiefs, which I shall refer to as counties, represent

175
648
631

[1] Cunnison, *Native Tribes*, pp. 22 and 24.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

IV. WIDER CONTACTS

Other Local Groups

We have so far in this account been concerned with delineating the main outlines of political and village structure and the kinship system. We have examined the internal constitution of the tribe and have only been concerned secondarily with the external relationships by which the Ngoni are connected with the wider world. But in the Fort Jameson District there are, and have been for many years, people who do not fall within the tribal framework but with whom the Ngoni interact. These include people from the British Isles and South Africa, Indians, and Coloured persons, as well as Africans from other tribes. The Europeans are there as administrators, missionaries, farmers, and traders. Indians are traders and farmers, while Coloured persons are farmers and foremen. Africans from other tribes are, like the Ngoni, labourers on the farms and in the township, as well as subsistence cultivators in their own tribal areas.

The land of the District is divided into Native Reserve and Trust land, farm-land, township, and Crown land. Almost all Ngoni villages lie on Reserve or Trust land, and it is in this zone that most of the activities described so far take place. On the farm-land Ngoni participate not as headmen or lieutenants or chiefs, but as labourers and foremen. They still fill the roles of husband, wife, sibling, parent, and child, and sometimes other kinship positions, but the family in the farm compound is on a smaller scale than in the village. In the town of Fort Jameson the range of activity open to them is greater, and there are Ngoni butchers, drivers, clerks, shop assistants, Native Urban Court assessors, and so on. All these roles on farm and in the town are shared with Africans from other tribes in the Eastern Province and from more distant regions.

The Churches

The influence of the non-African groups extends out beyond the areas in which they live into the reserves. We have already seen how the Administration has affected the life of the tribe. The Christian Church has also had a profound influence. By 1910 there were three denominations at work in Ngoni country: the Dutch Reformed Church Mission,[1] the White Fathers,[2] and the Universities' Mission to

[1] Algemeene Zending Commissie der Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk in den Oranje Vrijstaat.

[2] Société des Missionaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique, a Catholic Order.